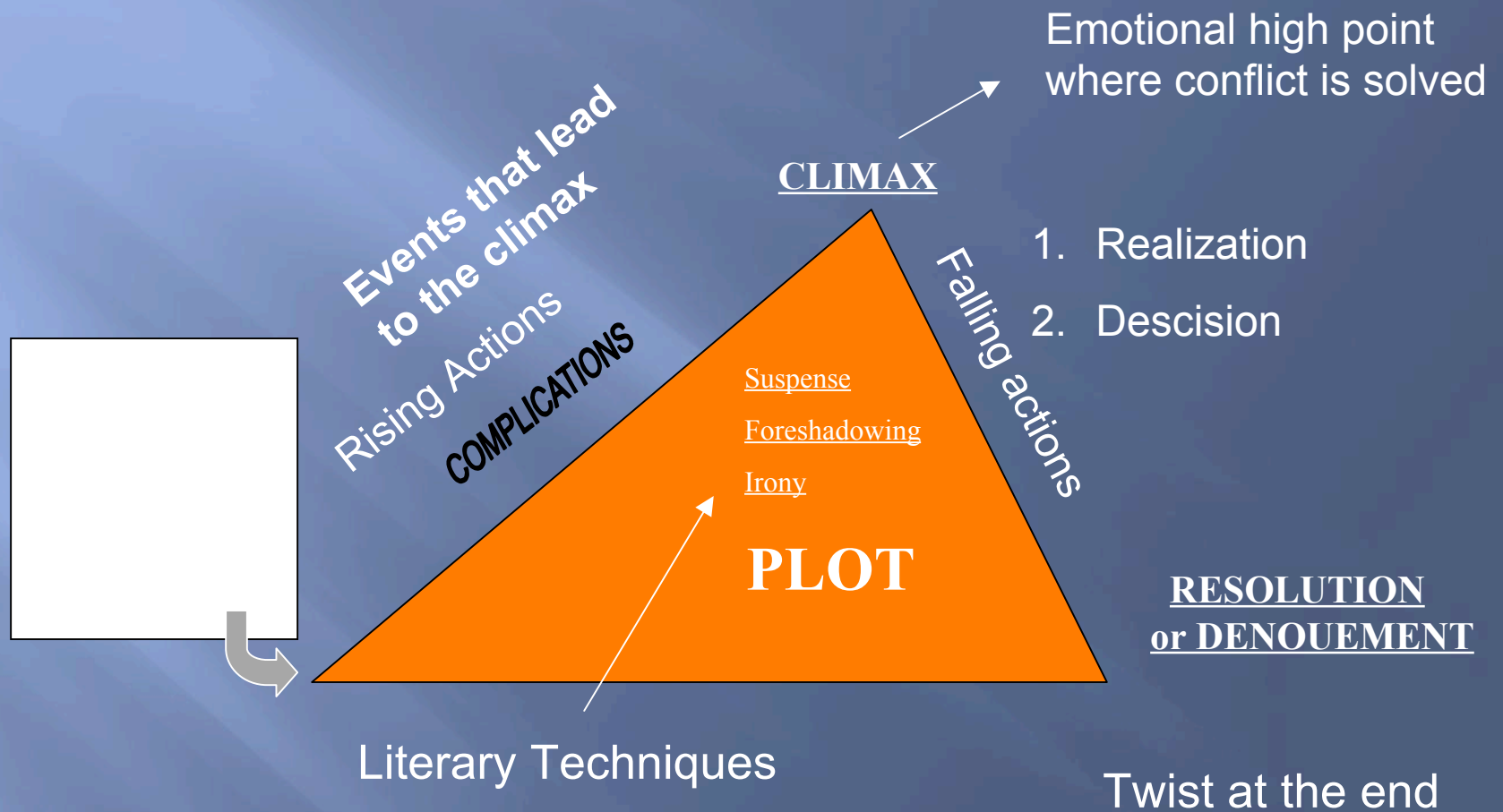


PLOT

Plot Structure



The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea; it is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one sitting. Whereas a novel can often have more than one plot (or a story within a story)

There are five essential parts of a plot:

Introduction

Rising Action

Climax

Falling Action

Resolution or Denouement

Introduction

The beginning of the story where the reader is introduced to the main characters and the setting is revealed.

Rising Action

This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax). There is a sense of building up and anticipation during this time. It is during this time that the reader is usually introduced to the antagonist in the story.

Climax

This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?

- 1) the main character receives new information
- 2) accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it)
- 3) acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).
- 4) the climax usually resolves the conflict.

Falling Action

The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader now knows what has happened (the source of the conflict) and now learns how the conflict will be resolved (events between climax and denouement). Many times the climax, falling action, and resolution of the story will take place in the final few pages of the story.

Resolution or Denouement

This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story. All questions are answered (or not - depending on the intent of the author) and the reader has a sense of completion.

Conflict

Conflict is essential to plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is the opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones.

There are two *types* of conflict:

- 1) **External** - A struggle with a force outside one's self.
- 2) **Internal** - A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

There are four *kinds* of conflict:

- 1) Man vs. Man (physical) - The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.
- 2) Man vs. Circumstances (classical) - The leading character struggles against fate, nature, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.
- 3) Man vs. Society (social) - The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.
- 4) Man vs. Himself/Herself (psychological) - The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices.